



Miss Irene Vera.

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## AMONG THE PLAYERS.

**B**Y the recent death of Alexandre Dumas  *fils*  the Theatre has lost one of its most gifted workers. Dumas was never as successful a dramatist as Sardou, or as great a one as Augier, but he has left a large number of plays behind him that will probably last with the language. Dumas was not a universal dramatist in the sense that Augier or Labiche were and Sar-

dou is. With the exception of his dramatization of his own novel, "La Dame aux Camélias" (Camille), most of his pieces are essentially French—even Parisian—and little known outside his own country. Some of them, "La Princesse de Bagdad," "L'Ami des Femmes," "L'Affaire Clémenceau," "Francillon," "Le Demi-Monde," have been tried both here and in England

with only a small measure of success. The younger Dumas was a thinker, a philosopher, a most graceful and polished writer, and each new work he gave to the public either contained a

the memory of Augier and Hugo. There is already one to the memory of Alexandre Dumas *père*. It is doubtful whether the Parisians will ever so honor the son.



Miss Emma Pollock.

Photographed by Falk.

sermon or discussed some social problem. From this point of view he has probably had a deeper influence on his time than any of his contemporaries. He left uncompleted a play entitled "La Route de Thèbes," on which he had been working six years. They are erecting beautiful statues in Paris to

Sarah Bernhardt will soon be seen in New York again. Truly marvellous is the vitality and energy of this remarkable woman. Although she must be well past fifty she is as full of schemes and plans for new plays and new fields of work as at the outset of her career. Bernhardt's acting is thoroughly artifi-

cial. It is by the most transparent theatrical devices that she succeeds in producing an impression on her audiences. It is clap-trap, pure and simple, and Duse's finer art has done much to show

wright. During her American tour Bernhardt will be seen in several new plays. One of them, "La Duchesse Catherine," is from her own pen and has not yet been seen in Paris. She



Miss Elsie De Wolfe.  
Photographed by Dupont.

us that Bernhardt's tears are but make-believe. Yet, in justice, it must be conceded that Bernhardt is a past mistress in the theatric school. She never touches our hearts as Duse does, she can never make us forget we are in a theatre as Duse can, but we feel that she is giving us an admirable imitation of the passions described by the play-

may also be seen at the Metropolitan Opera House in Alphonse Daudet's tragic play "L'Arlésienne," which has incidental music by Bizet. An English version of this piece, entitled "The Love that Kills," has been in the possession of A. M. Palmer for some time, but it is probable that only the French version will be seen this season.



Miss Mary Hampton.

"Rodion the Student" is the title of a new play produced by Richard Mansfield. It is a dramatization of the Russian author Dostoevsky's novel "Crime and Punishment." The story, as will be remembered, concerns a St. Petersburg student who is distressed for money. He is mentally deranged, from reading too much of Schopenhauer, and he murders an old usurer for the sake of her money. He escapes detection and defies his conscience to disturb him. But after the deed the phenomena of remorse begin, and finally, through the instrumentality of a girl—an outcast—who loves him, *Rodion* gives himself up to justice. This brief outline does scant justice to the plot, which is ingeniously contrived and worked out by the hand of a master. The play is as thrilling and interesting as the book, and will appeal to intellectual audiences, to

those who seek in the play-house something higher and better than mere frivolous amusement. Mr. Mansfield is always artistic and painstaking in every part he assumes; he could hardly have failed to make a success of the title rôle in this play. His mannerisms, indeed, marred to some extent his impersonation. Mannerisms are fatal to creative work, for the actor can never succeed in completely submerging his own personality in that of the character, and so there is no illusion. Mr. Mansfield also made the student too old and decrepit a man,



Miss Lilian Burkhardt.

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*Rodion's* mind was decrepit, but his body was young. Notwithstanding these little defects Mr. Mansfield has undoubtedly added a most interesting drama and character to his repertoire.

been anything else than a very mediocre actor. He has for several years been drawing a large salary as leading man of the Lyceum Company, and his manager has found him a drawing card,



Miss Annie Lewis.

Photograph by Morrison.

I hear it stated that neither Herbert Kelcey nor Fritz Williams will be members of the Lyceum Stock Company after this season, and it is intimated that Mr. Kelcey intends to star. In what? "The Bells"? Mr. Kelcey is, I believe, a most charming and amiable man in private life, but he has never

especially with that giddy, thoughtless young maiden known as the "matinée girl," who does not seek to be impressed in the theatre by the play or its interpretation, but is more than satisfied if she can see for an hour or two a number of well-dressed men and women disporting themselves before



Miss Katherine Grey.

the footlights. I hardly think, however, that Mr. Kelcey will do wisely in leaving Mr. Frohman. The starring tour, I fear, would not prove a remunerative undertaking.

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The much-discussed Yvette Guilbert is here at last, and by the time these lines appear in print she will have made her *début* at Olympia. I had a chat with her at the Savoy Hotel the day she arrived in New York, and found her a charming and most unassuming woman. "If it were possible," she said, "I would like to explain to my American audience, before I sing, the meaning of each of my songs, give by verbal description the types they portray, and explain how conscientiously I studied each of these types before attempting to imitate them. For, in my opinion, that is the secret of my success—imitation of well-known Paris types. It was a new departure from the old-fashioned and hackneyed music-hall song, and it was because my listeners recognized the characters I assumed that they accepted my work.

It is an error to think, as many do, that my reputation has been made by singing equivocal songs, for I hope my art is better and higher than that. Each of my songs presents a distinct type of humanity, the humanity we elbow each day in the street, and they sing of life as it is, not as we would have it. But, as I said before, the actual words of the songs are only secondary in artistic importance to the pantomime and facial play with which I accompany them. I even object to be called a songstress. I am a *déscuse*" (a reciter). Mlle. Guilbert told me that during the past six years—she became famous in 1889—she has been able to save a million francs.

The art of Yvette Guilbert is entirely new, although ballad singing is very



Ota Skinner.

old. Early in the present century, when the songs of Béranger were hummed by an entire nation, the highway singer was as common in France as the Italian organ man is in our streets to-day. But

study, fine tact, and intense emotional power that is requisite in the tragic actress. She has no voice and, indeed, her art does not require it. She chants rather than sings her songs and the ac-



Miss Maude Young.

From photograph (copyright, 1895) by W. M. Morrison, Chicago.

no songstress of the past, to our knowledge—and genius never goes unrecorded—has ever succeeded in elevating the singing of songs to the dignity of a beautiful and distinct art as Yvette Guilbert certainly has. She brings to her work all the intelligence, intellectual

companying music—such wonderful music, sad or lively, according to the mood of the poet—is not written for anything else. Mlle. Guilbert has been very successful in gathering together a remarkable repertory of songs—songs full of the pessimism of the day, but



Mme. Sarah Bernhardt.

each a delicate work of art, as regards music and words both. Few of them would bear translation. Not that they are immoral, for morality, as a wit once remarked, is largely a matter of geography. Some of them sing of persons and subjects, the mere mention of which is offensive to the prude, but which, nevertheless, exist and are part of our lives. One of these is called "La Pierreuse." The only possible translation of the word is our cruel one "outcast." The *pierreuse* is one of those fallen women who ply their wretched trade on the Paris fortifications. The woman's lover is a cutthroat. He commits a murder, and when he pays the penalty on the scaffold she watches the execution from a distance. The song tells of their lives and the love that bound these two degraded mortals together and the feelings of the woman when she sees her accomplice's gory

head fall into the basket. These diverse emotions are powerfully and wonderfully expressed by the singer, both by facial play and pantomimic gesture. Other of her songs are in a lighter vein and in these Yvette displays the talent of the finished *comédienne*. Her success here was unquestionable.

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Amateur theatricals have often proved an excellent training-school for incipient talent. Another instance of this is furnished by Elsie de Wolfe, formerly an amateur actress, who has won considerable distinction on the stage. Miss de Wolfe belongs to one of our most prominent families. She is an exceptionally attractive-looking woman, has independent means and unlimited influence, and, logically, should have made a bad actress. On the contrary, however, her careful and excellent work proves her to be a woman of intelligence and

artistic temperament. She is a finished and delightfully unconventional *comédienne* of the French school, and would be a valuable member of any stock company. At present she is playing with Mr. John Drew in "Christopher, Jr."

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The play, "A Social Highwayman," which the Holland brothers produced in New York with considerable success, has not proved so profitable on the road. In fact, the receipts with it fell so low in one city that the management was forced to take the piece off and substitute "A Man with a Past." The prosperity of the play in New York was surprising. There was nothing either in the story or its treatment to warrant it. The idea of a gentlemanly scoundrel taking advantage of his social entrées to pick the



pockets of his hosts is neither new nor savory, and while the adapter, Mary Stone, had done her work very neatly, the play as a whole was disjointed and unconvincing. Bertha Creighton, an excellent portrait of whom is reproduced here, holds a prominent position in this company.

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Katherine Grey, a comparatively newcomer, occupies a prominent position among our younger actresses. Her work in "Shore Acres" first attracted attention for the unconventionality of its conception and its artistic finish. She left "Shore Acres" to join Richard Mansfield, and confirmed the first impression of her unusual ability by a most admirable interpretation of the part of *Louka* in "The Arms and the Man." Since she left Mansfield she has done nothing to merit special mention, but she is very intelligent, and undoubtedly the best work she can do has not yet been shown.

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Otis Skinner, formerly a prominent member of Augustin Daly's company, and later leading man with Madame Modjeska, is starring this season in a play called "Villon the Vagabond." The play deals, of course, with the life and adventures of the French poet, François Villon, who flourished in the seventeenth century, and who, according to history, was one of the greatest scoundrels, and at the same time one of the greatest poets, the world has ever seen. The curious contradictions in the career of this extraordinary man have afforded the playwright plenty of dramatic material, of which he is said to have taken full advantage. The play has not yet been seen here, but Otis Skinner is deservedly an old and warm favorite with our theatre-goers.

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Olga Nethersole has confirmed the impression she made on her first visit to America. Her interpretation of

that impossible play "Denise," in which she opened her engagement at the Empire, did not call from the critics any extraordinary praise. It was the fault of the play. When, later, she appeared again as *Camille*, her work received the highest encomiums. Olga Nethersole is not a great actress yet, but she will become great. She has within her that divine spark which is called genius, and which, sooner or later, will give her a most prominent place on the English-speaking stage. We have at present only one English-speaking actress who can put herself on a level with Olga Nethersole, and that is Minnie



Mlle. Emma Calvé.

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Maddern Fiske. Nethersole is still immature in art ; she has not yet given out her entire measure ; her efforts are largely tentative, but as she grows surer of herself she will improve and the artistic defects now apparent will

and did not meet with the same success that it did abroad.

The opera is founded upon a story by Jules Claretie entitled "La Cigarette"—an incident of the last Carlist war in Spain. A Basque peasant named Ara-



Miss Bertha Creighton.

From photograph (copyright, 1895) by B. J. Falk, New York.

be eliminated. Miss Nethersole will be seen shortly in a dramatization of "Carmen."

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Massenet's latest opera, "La Navarraise," was produced at the Metropolitan Opera House on December 11th,

quail is madly in love with a young girl whom he cannot marry because he is without a *dot*. This *dot* he must have at any price. Just at this moment a reward is offered to whoever shall deliver the Spanish army from its most dangerous enemy, Zucarraga. Zucarraga has been wounded ; Araquil gets access to

him and basely poisons the wound ; Zucarraga dies, and the peasant claims the promised sum from the Spanish general. The general can neither break his word nor encourage a dastardly crime. He pays the money to the Basque, and then orders him to be shot. Araquil dies while smoking a cigarette. Massenet, in common with other composers, was struck by the adaptability of the story to operatic purposes, and he saw in it a great part for Calvé. Of course, he had to change the story a little so as to make the woman the central figure, so that now it is the Basque girl who commits the crime.

The little opera is very interesting from the dramatic point of view, but somewhat of a disappointment musically. In fact, there is not much music in it. Dramatic action, the crash of arms, and the war of battle predominate. "Cavalleria Rusticana" and "I Pagliacci" became famous on account of their wonderful music. "La

Navarraise" is chiefly interesting as a dramatic episode. There is a nocturnal symphony between the first and second acts, which is effective and characteristic, but otherwise there is nothing striking in the work.

Calvé is simply magnificent in the title rôle. Her superb voice is heard at its best, and the part affords her an admirable opportunity for her fine acting powers.

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Portraits of Emma Pollock, whose dainty dancing was one of the best features of Harrigan's entertainments, and who plays *Taggs* in "The County Fair;" Maude Young, who is endowed by Nature with an ideal face if not with histrionic genius; Lillian Burkhart, a versatile and charming young character actress; Mary Hampton, leading woman of the "Sowing the Wind" company; Irene Vera, a favorite of the burlesque stage, and Annie Lewis, are reproduced in this article.

Arthur Hornblow.

